

Message Text

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TAGS: PINT, MA

SUBJECT: LOCAL ELECTIONS: PRESIDENT RATSIRAKA'S PARTY WINS

REFS: (A) TANA 439, (B) TANA 483 (NOTAL), (C) TANA 535

1. SUMMARY. WITH RESULTS OF MARCH 20 ELECTIONS 98 PERCENT COMPLETE, PRESIDENT RATSIRAKA'S PARTY AREMA HAS WON 89.48 PERCENT OF 73,000 AVAILABLE SEATS ON FOKONTANY EXECUTIVE COMMITTEES. AKFM-KDRSM WON ONLY 7.3 PERCENT, MOSTLY IN AND AROUND TANANARIVE. RESULTS OF NEXT STAGES OF LOCAL ELECTIONS APPEAR FOREGONE CONCLUSION. END SUMMARY.

2. RESULTS NOW AVAILABLE FOR MARCH 20 ELECTIONS FROM 10,222 OF THE APPROX 10,400 FOKONTANY. WITH 72,904 EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE SEATS AT STAKE, PRESIDENT RATSIRAKA'S "REVOLUTIONARY ORGANIZATION" AREMA HAS WON 65,232 OF THE SEATS, OR 89.48 PERCENT. AKFM-KDRSM WON ONLY 5,344 SEATS, OR 7.33 PERCENT. OF THESE 3,506 ARE IN TANANARIVE PROVINCE WHERE AKFM-KDRSM WON 20.2 PERCENT OF THE AVAILABLE SEATS. IN TANANARIVE CITY PROPER, AKFM WON OPI 908 OF THE 1,763 SEATS, OR A BARE MAJORITY OF 51.5 PERCENT. MONIMA HAS BEEN COMPLETELY HUMILIATED, WINNING ONLY 1,248 SEATS, OR 1.7 PERCENT OF AVAILABLE SEATS. EVEN IN TULEAR PROVINCE, SUPPOSEDLY A MONIMA STRONGHOLD, MONIMA GAINED ONLY 810 SEATS,

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OR 7.7 PERCENT. AS EXPECTED, VONJY AND UDECMA-KMTP DID POORLY, WINNING 1,035 AND 45 SEATS RESPECTIVELY.

3. SIMILAR PATTERN WAS APPARENTLY REPEATED IN APRIL 3 ELECTIONS. IN THESE ELECTIONS THE VOTERS IN EACH FOKONTANY CHOSE AN EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE PRESIDENT FROM AMONG THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEMBERS ELECTED MAR 20. ONLY PRELIMINARY RESULTS ARE AVAILABLE, BUT AGAIN

AKFM CANDIDATES APPARENTLY HAVE WON A MAJORITY OF THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE'S PRESIDENCIES IN TANANARIVE CITY, WITH AREMA CANDIDATES TAKING THE LION'S SHARE OF THE PRESIDENCIES IN THE PROVINCES.

4. ELECTIONS ON APRIL 17 AND MAY 8 AND 29 STAND TO BE JUST AS ONE-SIDED. ON APRIL 17, THE 10,400 FOKONTANY EXECUTIVE COMMITTEES CHOOSE ONE OR TWO MEMBERS FROM AMONG THEMSELVES TO FORM THE POPULAR COUNCILS OF 1,172 FIRASAM-POKONTANY. EACH EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE PRESIDENT ELECTED APRIL 3 WILL AUTOMATICALLY BE A MEMBER OF THE FIRASAM-POKONTANY POPULAR COUNCILS. LATER, A "REVOLUTIONARY YOUTH" AND "REVOLUTIONARY WOMAN" FOR EACH EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE WILL ALSO BE CHOSEN BY THE NATIONAL FRONT TO SIT ON THE POPULAR COUNCIL. WITH 89.5 PERCENT OF THE FOKONTANY EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEMBERS BEING AREMA MEMBERS, IT APPEARS LIKELY THAT THE FIRASAM-POKONTANY POPULAR COUNCILS WILL BE HEAVILY AREMA ALSO. PRESUMABLY AREMA INFLUENCE WITHIN THE FRONT (PRESIDENT RATSIRAKA IS THE FRONT PRESIDENT) WILL BE STRONG ENOUGH TO ENSURE THAT MOST REVOLUTIONARY WOMEN AND YOUTH WILL BE AREMA MEMBERS ALSO. THE SAME CASCADE EFFECT SHOULD RESULT IN THE ELECTIONS OF MAY 8 AND 29, PRODUCING FIVONDRONAM-POKONTANY AND FOKONTANY POPULAR COUNCILS WITH HEAVY MAJORITIES.

5. THUS BY EARLY JUNE, PRESIDENT RATSIRAKA'S PARTY SHOULD HAVE CONTROL OF THE VAST MAJORITY OF THE NEW GOVERNMENT STRUCTURE. AT THAT POINT, THE ONLY QUESTION LEFT TO BE ANSWERED WILL BE THE COMPOSITION OF THE NATIONAL POPULAR ASSEMBLY EXPECTED TO BE ELECTED DURING JUNE. SINCE THIS ELECTION WILL BE FOR ONLY A FEW POSITIONS (PROBABLY SLIGHTLY OVER 100 ASSEMBLY MEMBERS), IT IS POSSIBLE THAT THE OTHER 4 PARTIES IN THE FRONT MAY DO BETTER LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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THAN IN RECENT LOCAL ELECTIONS, BUT BY THAT TIME AREMA'S MOMENTUM WILL BE DIFFICULT TO OVERCOME.

6. WE HAVE HEARD VIRTUALLY NO ALLEGATIONS OF ANY VOTING FRAUD IN THE MARCH 20 ELECTIONS. EVEN RICHARD ANDRIAMANJATO, PRESIDENT OF THE AKFM-KDRSM (AND PRESIDENT OF TANANARIVE CITY COUNCIL) HAS ACKNOWLEDGED "FAIR PLAY" IN THE ELECTIONS, ATTRIBUTING HIS PARTY'S DEFEAT TO ITS LACK OF MEANS TO RUN A CAMPAIGN THROUGHOUT THE ENTIRE COUNTRY AS DID AREMA. ANDRIAMANJATO DID GET OFF ONE PARTING SHOT, HOWEVER. IN AN INTERVIEW THREE DAYS AFTER THE ELECTION, HE ALLOWED THAT IT REMAINS TO BE SEEN WHETHER THE VOTERS' CHOICE FOR AREMA IS THE RESULT OF POLITICAL CONVICTION. ANDRIAMANJATO HAS PUT HIS FINGER ON THE SINGLE WEAKNESS IN RATSIRAKA'S OVER WHELMING VICTORY. AREMA IS KNOWN TO HAVE THE FULL BACKING OF THE GOVERNMENT AND HEAVY PARTICIPATION OF GOVERNMENT CIVIL SERVANTS WHO MAY FEEL, FOR THE SAKE OF THEIR CAREERS, THAT THEY SHOULD BE ACTIVE AREMA MEMBERS AND CANDIDATES IN THE ELECTIONS. THIS IS THE SAME PATH THAT WAS FOLLOWED WITH

TSIRANANA'S GOVERNMENT AND HIS PARTY THE PSD (PARTI-SOCIAL DEMOCRATE). IN FACT IT IS ALLEGED THAT THE SAME CIVIL SERVANTS WHO ARE ACTIVE IN AREMA WERE PSD ACTIVISTS IN THE EARLIER REGIME. FURTHERMORE, WHILE WE CAN'T BE CERTAIN, WE SUSPECT THAT MANY ORDINARY CITIZENS VOTED FOR AREMA BECAUSE THEY BELIEVED THEY WERE EXPECTED TO VOTE FOR THE PRESIDENT. ANDRIAMANJATO'S QUESTIONING THE VOTERS' POLITICAL CONVICTION REMINDS US THAT PRESIDENT TSIRANANA'S FALL FROM POWER BEGAN WITH STUDENT DEMONSTRATIONS 3 DAYS FOLLOWING HIS ELECTION BY 99 PERCENT MAJORITY.BARRETT

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